S-52 Liberty Hall Westover vicinity private

1795

GREAT

9ited on the north branch of the MMA Annemessex River, Liberty Hall displays the regional "telescope" or stepped form of house common to the Eastern Shores of Maryland and, especially, Virginia. Extensive historical and architectural research has developed a relatively clear picture of the changes made to Liberty Hall over a period of two-hundred years.

First mention of a specific dwelling house was recorded in 1783 during the ownership of James Curtis. The federal tax assessors found on his plantation a, "Brick wall dwelling house, out of repair." Following James Curtis's death in 1791, the 311-acre property was inherited by William Curtis, who began construction of a new house (1795) in proximity to the old brick structure. Both buildings were identified in the 1798 tax assessment. William Curtis's dwelling and outbuildings were described as,

1 Dwelling House built of wood 34 feet by 28 feet two story high 7 windows 5½ feet long by 3 feet, 10 windows 4½ feet by 2 feet 3 inches 4 garret windows 3 feet 8 inches by 2 feet 3 inches, 1 Kitchen 18 by 16 feet, 1 Milk house 8 feet square, 1 Smoke House 12 feet square, 2 Negro houses 18 by 16 feet.

replacement of earlier dwellings was common practice during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and repeated on several nearby plantations such as Tudor Hall (S-55), and Waters River (S-54). Interpretably was fitted with raised panel wainscoting, dentiled cornice moldings, ovolo molded door and window surrounds, and elaborate mantels that combine Georgian and Federal period designs. The dining room mantel is extremely similar to mantels of Workington (1793) and the Tull farmhouse (1790s). Unlike most houses in Somerset County, the second floor bedrooms and passage were trimmed with flush or raised-panel wainscoting.

The 1798 tax assessment indicates that an eighteen foot by sixteen foot kitchen once stood separate from the main house. At a slightly later date the kitchen was joined to the house by a colonnade, which by the second quarter of the mineteenth century had been enclosed and raised to a two-story level. Around 1935, the old kitchen was shoved off into the marsh. Finally in 1975, a two-story addition using old materials was erected on the site of the old kitchen. This architectural history of Liberty Hall points clearly to the complex development of many "telescope" houses, and at the same time, helps to dispell the often repeated argument that these houses were built strictly from the smallest section to the largest as the family grew or the plantation income increased.

Liberty Hall stands on land known in the seventeenth century as "Armstrong's Lott," and "Armstrong's Purchase," commonly known as "Scipers Plantation." Patented to Matthew Armstrong, a Boston mariner, during the early to mid 1660s, his widow, Hannah transferred ownership of a large part of "Armstrong's Lott to Daniel Curtis on April 17, 1672 (JJ/341). Daniel Curtis's will of 1680 bequeathed ownership of his plantation to his son, James Curtis, who in turn willed the family land to his son, Charles Curtis, in 1721. Twenty years later Charles Curtis died, and like his father and grandfather, he left "Armstrong's Lott" to his son, James Curtis, who had the land resurveyed for 311 acres in 1767. James Curtis occupied his plantation for a full half-century, and after his wife's death, "Armstrong's Lott" would pass to his nephew, William Curtis (EB 17/164).

It was during William Curtis's ownership that the present house was erected, and following William, Liberty Hall was inherited by his son and daughter-in-law, John and Sarah Curtis. The farm remained in Curtis family hands until western was sold in 1938 to C. Foster Matthews (JMT 113/550). The current owners have occupied the house for the past twenty-four years.

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••••	RTY HALL (preferr	ed)			
LOCATION			Ford Ro	vad on	
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OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED		GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTE X_NO		INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	TRANSPORTATIO
OWNER OF	PROPERTY	 		Teleph	one No.
NAME				rerebu	one no.
	and Mrs. Theodore	Dorman	······································	(301) 65	1-0532
	rty Hall			STATE	
CITY, TOWN West	over X	VICINITY OF		Maryland	21871
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DESCRIPTION

__GOOD

__FAIR

CHECK ONE CHECK ONE CONDITION _ORIGINAL SITE __UNALTERED __DETERIORATED _EXCELLENT __MOVED __ALTERED __RUINS

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

__UNEXPOSED

Liberty Hall is located in the vicinity of Manokin in Somerset County, Maryland. Basically similar in form to Linden Hill and Tudor Hall also in Somerset County, it is a fine example of mid-eighteenth century architectural style.

The main block of the house is clapboard with a shingle roof, three bays wide and two bays deep. Two and one-half storys, it sits on a high brick foundation with horizontally barred windows. The double door in the center bay is three-paneled on the exterior with diagonal battens on the __interior___There is no transom. This door is graced by a fine broken, scrolled pediment. The design of the stoop is of the period. First story windows are 12/12 and second story windows are 9/6. Enclosed gable end chimneys are found on either side of the main block. The Federal Direct Tax Assessment of 1798 accurately describes the present structure:

> Particular list, Dwelling Houses: (this includes houses worth more than \$100 plus about one acre of land). 1 Dwelling House built of wood 34 feet by 28 do Two storey high 7 windows 5 1/2 feet by 3 do 10 windows 4 1/2 feet by 2 feet 3 Inches 4 Garret windows 3 feet 8 I [nches] by 2 feet 3 I [nches] 1 Kitchen 18 feet by 16 ditto 1 Milk house 8 feet square 1 Smoake House 12 feet sqr 2 Negro Houses 18 feet by 16 do. Value \$650.00

The old frame kitchen at the other end of the three-part plan was destroyed circa 1935 and reconstructed by Mr. Theodore Dorman along the original lines in 1975. A hyphen connecting the main block to this kitchen was enclosed in about 1830. Its architectural elements are distinctly Greek Revival as opposed to the Georgian influence in evidence throughout the rest of the house.

Most of the interior of the main block has remained completely intact. There are three rooms and a stairhall downstairs and three chambers plus a bath on the second floor. The house has a basic center hall plan minus the hall west wall with the main entrance into the great room. hall is behind the great room and can be entered from the central rear door. The dining room enters off the stair hall. The withdrawing room is entered from the dining room only.

Parts of the interior of the house are finely paneled. There are four corner fireplaces: one with a simple board molding and shelf mantel in the withdrawing room; one with an elaborate Georgian console mantel in the dining room; and two with Federal mantels with pilasters and classic friezes, one each in the great room and upstairs bed chamber. All the rooms are paneled with dado and have cornices. The stair hall has magnificent raised paneling.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Liberty Hall Somerset County,

Somerset County CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION, continued

All of the door and window frames have dog-ear moldings. The great room and dining room have double dog-ear moldings. The stair hall and the withdrawing room have simple wooden ceiling cornices while the great room and dining room have more elaborate dentil cornices.

Original pine floors exist throughout the house. An interesting feature of Liberty Hall is that it has been painted only three times since its construction: once by Foster Mathews (white); once by John Christophel (brown and grey), circa 1954; and once by Theodore Dorman (multi-color), 1961.

During recent work on the fireplace opening in the great room, it was discovered that at one time it was larger than at present. Cooking utensils and remains of interior bake ovens were found. This gives rise to speculation that the great room existed before "Liberty Hall" was constructed. At the present time, there is no historical documentation to verify this hypothesis, interesting though it may be.

Liberty Hall stands today as a good example of some of the best architectural elements of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland.

PERIOD REHISTORIC —1400-1499 —1500-1599 —1600-1699 X1700-1799 X1800-1899 —1900-	AF _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC _AGRICULTURE _ARCHITECTURE _ART _COMMERCE _COMMUNICATIONS	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CI —COMMUNITY PLANNING —CONSERVATION —ECONOMICS —EDUCATION —ENGINEERING —EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT —INDUSTRY —INVENTION	HECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LAW LITERATURE MILITARY MUSIC PHILOSOPHY POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—RELIGION —SCIENCE —SCULPTURE —SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN —THEATER —TRANSPORTATION —OTHER (SPECIFY)
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specific dates between 1783 and 1798 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE and addition circa 1830

Liberty Hail is significant in the architectural history of Somerset—County—for several reasons.—A building of typical style and proportions for the period 1783-1798 in Somerset, it is, however, constructed of frame rather than the brick more usually found in a structure of this sort. The house retains in good condition nearly all of its 18th century architectural features. Each of the downstairs rooms retains full woodwork, including cornice, chair rail, baseboard, paneling, and door and window moldings. A hyphen in the Greek Revival style, built to connect the old kitchen to the main house circa 1830, remains also as an example of well-executed interior work of that

berty Hall stands on a tract of land patented for Matthew Armstrong in 1663 as "Scipers Plantation." These 600 acres consisted of two parts, "Armstrong's Lott" and "Armstrong's Purchase," 300 and 200 acres respectively. A separate patent was issued for the former in 1666. Two deeds from Cecilius Calvert, first to Matthew Armstrong and Stephen Bond (1667) and then to Armstrong with altered boundaries (1670), were also issued for "Scipers Plantation."

In 1672 half of this land was sold to Daniel Curtis of Somerset County, the tenant farmer on the tract, by Hannah Armstrong "of Boston in New England widdow (the relict and sole executrix of Mathew Armstrong late of Boston in New England marriner deceased)." For 4,000 pounds of tobacco Mrs. Armstrong sold Curtis 250 acres, the upper part of Armstrong's Lott and Purchase on which a house stood, plus half of the cattle, hogs and other possessions owned jointly by Armstrong and Stephen Bond. The deed also states that it is "to be understood that after Daniell Curtis hath his halfe of the whole that was out uppon the Land when A Tennant by Lease and divided after the expatriation of the lease he the said Daniell Curtis is to enjoy first the half of the whole and then to have the half of the other half left."2

Curtis died in 1681, leaving this property to his son James, who upon his death in 1721 left it to his son Charles. Also in his will, James provided for the care of his son and one of his daughters until they rached the ages of eighteen and sixteen respectively: "... and it my Will & desire yr my Exctr shall have all ye proffett & benifitt of my son Charles & my Daughter Rachels Estate till they come to the age aforesd provided he educate & bring them up & give my son Charles four years schooling & cover ye south side of my dwelling house wth

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Liberty Hall Somerset County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER

8 PAGE 2

DATE ENTERED

SIGNIFICANCE, continued

cypress & cover my kitchen & milk house if need require so that my sd son Charles may enjoy & possess his Estate "3

Charles Curtis died in 1741, bequeathing "the Plantation or Land I now live on called Armstrong's Lott" of 250 acres to his son James. The tract was resurveyed in 1767 for 311 acres. On the Tax Assessment of 1783 James Curtis was taxed for this Resurvey and 147 other acres. The improvements on Armstrong's Lott were as follows:

brick wall dwelling house out of repair. Kitchen Barn milk house midling good other houses sorry a small young apple & peach orchard. other improvements midling

Curtis possessed seven slaves, four horses and twenty black cattle. There were five white inhabitants on his property, two male and three female.

James Curtis died in 1791, apparently without any surviving children. He made the usual provisions for his "dear and well beloved wife," that if she did not remarry all of the estate, real and personal, was to be hers to dispose of in a will. But if she married again or died intestate, the personal estate was to go to two relatives and the real estate to his nephew, William Curtis, or nephew John Curtis if William had no heirs.

William is listed in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax as possessor of Armstrong's Lott. On the Particular List of Lands for Great Annemessex Hundred, which includes assessment on land and houses worth less than \$100, the improvements were as follows:

1 old Dwelling House 40 feet by 20 feet
2 old Negro Houses 18' X 16' 1 Lumber House

12' square 1 Barn 32' X 29' 1 Barn 24' X

20' 1 Corn House 22' X 8'

On the Particular List of Dwelling Houses, which includes houses worth over \$100, the improvements were:

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Liberty Hall Somerset County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

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PAGE 3

SIGNIFICANCE, continued

1 Dwelling House built of wood 34 feet by 28 feet Two storey high 7 windows 5 1/2 feet by 3 ft. 10 windows 4 1/2' by 2' 3" 4 Garret windows 3' 8" by 2' 3" -1 Kitchen 18' by 16' 1 Milk house 8' square 1 Smoake House 12' square 2 Negro Houses 18' by 16'

When the information from the 1783 and 1798 assessments is compared, it is evident that the present structure called Liberty Hall was built between the years of the two evaluations. There is an old dwelling house on the 1783 assessment that appears again on the 1798 assessment in addition to Liberty Hall, thus indicating that the original house on the tract was not incorporated in the present structure as has sometimes been thought.

TPatents 6/224 and 10/551, Hall of Records, Annapolis.

²Deed JJ/381, Hall of Records.

 3 Will EB 9/72, Hall of Records.

4Will EB 9/224; Patented Certificate #215 (Somerset County); Lands and Property, Tax Assessment of 1783, Great Annemessex Hundred, Somerset County; Hall of Records.

5Will EB 17/164, Hall of Records.

⁶Federal Direct Tax Assessment of 1798, Great Annemessex Hundred, Somerset County; Hall of Records.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land and Probate Records of Somerset County, Maryland, in the Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Tax Assessment of 1783 and Federal Direct Tax of 1798 for Great Annemessex Hundred, Somerset County, Maryland; Hall of Records

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Form 10-445 (5/62) I STATE Maryland county Somerset town Upper Fairmounduity street no.

original owner Curt's Family original use Dwelling present owner Mr. Theodore Dorman present use Dwelling wall construction Clapboard no. of stories 2½ w/ smaller 2½ add.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INVENTORY

^{2 NAME} Liberty Hall

S-52

DATE OR PERIOD

c. 1750

ARCHITECT Colonial

BUILDER

3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE

4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION

OPEN TO PUBLIC

No

This is a very fine smaller house of the colonial period with 4 rooms downstairs and 4 up. It is 3 bays wide and 2 deep. The first storey windows are 12/12, the second are 9/6. The central door has a broken scrolled pediment. The house sits on a high brick foundation with horizontally barred windows.

The interior is finely panelled. There are 4 corner fireplaces, one with a simple colonial mantel, one with a Georgian mantel with consoles and two with Federal mantels with reeded rilasters
and classic friezes. All of the rooms are panelled up to the chair
rail and have panelled window seats. All of the door and window
frames are dog ear moldings. Two rooms have simple wooden ceiling
cornices and two have elaborate ones with centils. There are brick
arches in the basement to support the chimneys. There is an enclosed
chimney at each end of the house. The one on the right has the
brick exposed at the first storey level by the omission of the clapboards. The one on the left is now enclosed in an addition. This
addition is 2 bays wide w/ 6/6 windows. All of the windows and door
frames have pedimented Greek Revival cornices of carved wood.

This is a very fine house. It was thought to have been

This is a very fine house. It was thought to have been originally a smaller house enlarged to its present size about 1750. It is also thought that most of the fine panelling was taken from another home in the area and installed in about 1795.

5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endongered

Interior

Exterio

Excellently maintained and restore.

6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)

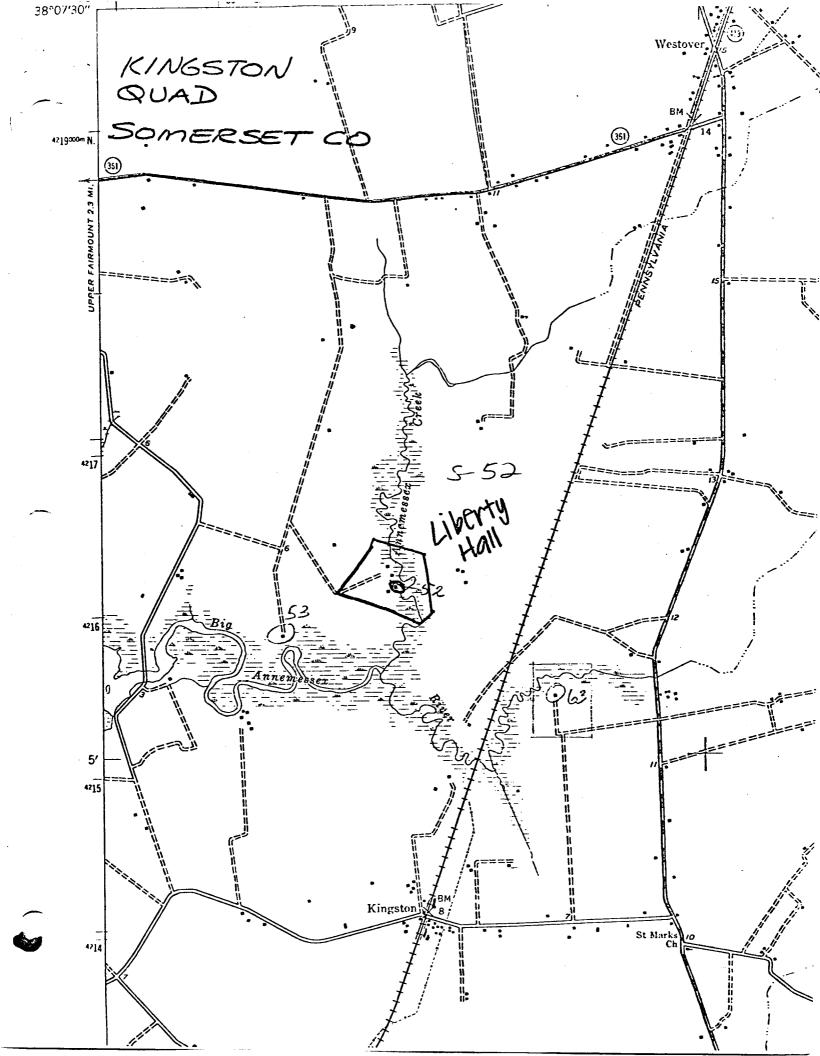
7. PHOTOGRAPH

PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages)
 INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.

9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER
Paul A. Brinkman

DATE OF RECORD

5/8/67





Liberty Hall S-52
Westover vicinity, Somerset Co.,Md.
Northwest Elevation
5/86, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Liberty Hall S-52
Westover vicinity, Somerset Co., Md.
North Elevation
7/86, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Liberty Hall S-52
Westover vicinity, Somerset CO., Md.
Parlor Mantel Detail
7/86, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Liberty Hall S-52
Westover vicinity, Somerset Co., Md.
Graenary
7/86, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



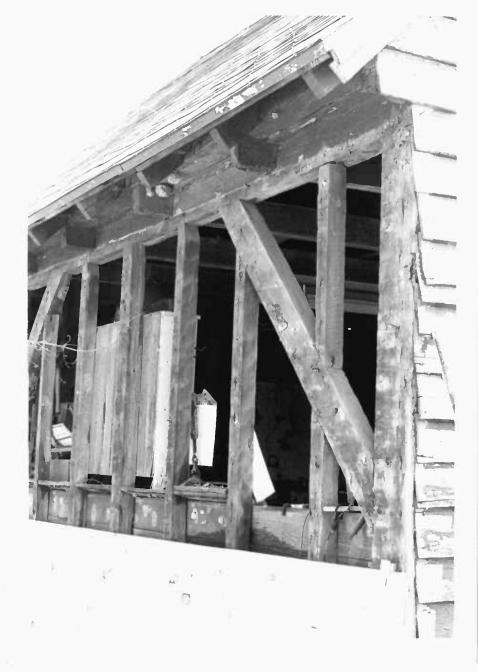
Liberty Hall S-52
Westover vicinity, Somerset Co. Md.
Corner Brace on Corn House
3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg/Md. Historical Trust



Liberty Hall S-52
Westmer, vicinity, Somerset Co, Md.
Main Street - North Elevation
3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg/Md. Historical Trust



Liberty Hall S-52
Westover vicinity, Somerset co. Md.
Corn House With infill of Oyster Shells
3/86 Paul Touart Photographer
Neg/Md. Historical Trust



Liberty Hall, Somerset Co. Md. 5-52 Mortise and Tenon Frame Wall of Corn House 3/86 Paul Touart, Photographer Neg/Md. Historical Trust



MAN ENTRANCEWAY

JUF 1975



END GABLE, MAIN BLOCK

JUF 1975



LIBERTY HALL, SOMERSET

5-52

FRONT DOOR PINEL



LITCHEN WINE ENJOHEN S-52

JUF



S-52

WHITE AT GREAT ROOM

JEF 1975



LIBERTY NOW SOMERSET S-52

FIREPLACE, GREAT ROOM



LIBERTY WILL , SOMERSET

5-52

FRONT STOOP

1975



END ENCLOSED CHIMNEY

975



5-52 * Liberty Hall Somerset



P.holographed by DANIEL C. CHURCH